UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/224
20 June 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session
Item 65 of the preliminary list*

COMPREHENSIVE TEST-BAN TREATY

Letter dated 14 June 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In Australia's capacity as current Chair of the South Pacific Forum, I wish to bring to your attention the attached statement which has been issued today, 14 June 1995, by Permanent Representatives of South Pacific States Members of the United Nations, condemning the decision by France to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 65 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Richard BUTLER, AM

* A/50/50/Rev.1.

95-18471 (E) 230695 280695

ANNEX

Statement on the resumption of French nuclear testing issued on 14 June 1995 by the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of Australia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands

South Pacific States Members of the United Nations deplore the announcement by France that it proposes to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific.

Only one month ago, following exhaustive negotiations at United Nations Headquarters, the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including France, decided on the indefinite extension of that Treaty. At that time France also agreed that nuclear disarmament should be vigorously pursued and "pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the nuclear-weapon States should exercise utmost restraint".

South Pacific countries do not believe the testing programme, now announced by France, is consistent with those undertakings. Moreover, South Pacific countries, in particular small island States, gave their best asset in the Treaty negotiations, namely their trust, that the political understandings on which the extension of the Treaty were based would be adhered to. It now appears that their trust is to be abused.

French nuclear testing in the Pacific takes place in a territory far distant from metropolitan France. This brings back to public consciousness the question, if French nuclear testing is as safe as French authorities claim and has "no ecological consequences", why is it conducted in the South Pacific.

Mururoa Atoll (French Polynesia) is also within the area of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), which among other things provides a zone free of nuclear testing.

The resumption of testing by France would thus directly contravene what the independent States of the South Pacific region, exercising their individual sovereignty, have agreed to jointly.

The proposed French actions are particularly unfortunate at this critical stage in the negotiations in Geneva on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

They also raise doubts about France's international commitment to meet its obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

This French decision, like the recent Chinese nuclear test, flies in the face of the global trend towards nuclear disarmament and an end to nuclear testing that has seen such encouraging progress since the end of the cold war.

As South Pacific representatives at the United Nations, we call upon the Government of France to reconsider its decision as a matter of urgency.

UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/225
20 June 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session
Item 65 of the preliminary list*

COMPREHENSIVE TEST-BAN TREATY

Letter dated 16 June 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In Australia's capacity as Chair of the South Pacific Forum, I have the honour to bring to your attention the enclosed statement issued on 15 June 1995 by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. P. J. Keating, MP, Chairman of the South Pacific Forum, on behalf of the South Pacific Forum Heads of Government, on the resumption of nuclear testing by France.

I request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 65 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Richard BUTLER, AM

* A/50/50/Rev.1.

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ANNEX

Statement on the resumption of nuclear testing by France, issued at Canberra on 15 June 1995 by the Chairman of the South Pacific Forum, the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. P. J. Keating MP

On behalf of South Pacific Forum Heads of Government as current Chair of the Forum, I condemn France's decision to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

Individual Forum Governments have already issued statements and protests that reflect the depth of their disappointment. The immediate widespread public antagonism to France's decision right across the South Pacific reflects the resentment felt by our peoples.

Forum Heads of Government understand and share these feelings. On their behalf, I express our unequivocal opposition to France's decision.

The statements that have been issued by other nuclear Powers, and by other countries in Asia and in other parts of the world are welcome. Forum leaders hope that France will hear and take note of what the world is saying.

France has exercised a choice about the nature of its engagement in the South Pacific. Forum members had welcomed the improved relations between France and countries in the region. France's decision is a major setback to this trend which was partly founded on its 1992 moratorium on nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

The wider implications of France's decision are also of deep concern to Forum Heads of Government.

France's decision undermines the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The decision is particularly regrettable in the light of agreement reached at that Conference, including by France, that negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty should be completed by no later than 1996 and that, pending such a treaty, nuclear-weapon States would exercise the utmost restraint.

The South Pacific Forum remains strongly committed to a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a key step in global efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and eventually to eliminate nuclear weapons. It offers the prospect of ending testing completely - in the South Pacific as elsewhere. The Heads of Government have noted President Chirac's commitment that France would sign such a treaty. They will hold France to that commitment.

The Heads of Government also call upon France to abide by the protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty.

I am in contact with my fellow Heads of Government about arrangements for a Forum delegation to convey to the French Government the depth of the Forum's concern. I envisage that the delegation would be led by the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Evans.

UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/226
20 June 1995
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/SPANISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Item 80 of the preliminary list*

CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

Letter dated 26 May 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Please find enclosed the final document of the Regional Seminar on the National Implementation of the Convention on Chemical Weapons, held in Havana from 14 to 16 March 1995.

I kindly request the distribution of the present letter and its annex as an official document of the General Assembly under item 80 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Bruno RODRÍGUEZ PARRILLA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/50/50/Rev.1.

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Annex

FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE REGIONAL SEMINAR ON THE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS, HELD IN HAVANA, 14-16 MARCH 1995

The Regional Seminar on the National Implementation of the Convention on Chemical Weapons was held at the Palacio de las Convenciones in Havana from 14 to 16 March 1995. It was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, with the participation of other institutions of the Republic of Cuba and the cooperation of the provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and with the support of the Governments of Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

A total of 14 countries from the Latin American and Caribbean region participated in the Seminar, including signatory States and States which had not yet signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, namely, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Saint Lucia and Uruguay.

The following countries also participated as guests: Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Russian Federation, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

From the provisional Technical Secretariat, the Legal Adviser of the Preparatory Commission, Mr. Félix Calderón, attended, representing the Executive Secretary of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), Mr. Enrique Roman Morey, participated as a guest, as did other officials as noted on the list of participants.

Representatives of non-governmental organizations participating in the Seminar included research assistants from the Institute of Public Law of the University of Frankfurt, Germany, and from Argonne National Laboratory, United States of America.

The seminar was officially opened by Dr. Rosa Elena Siméon Negrín, Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment of the Republic of Cuba. In her address the Minister highlighted the main points of the Convention. She said that more than 20 years of negotiations had culminated, in 1992, in the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of resolution 47/39, in which the Assembly commended the draft Convention and requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to open it for signature in January 1993, at which time Cuba, together with another 129 States, became one of the original signatories.

To an extent which was unprecedented, in the sphere of international law on disarmament and international security, the Convention on chemical weapons was a comprehensive and complex instrument, balanced in its provisions, non-discriminatory in spirit and global in its objectives. Correctly and

effectively implemented, it should contribute to an increase in world - and, therefore, regional - security: for all that, full appreciation should continue to be accorded to the real importance of the contribution it would make to developing countries, where security was not expressed in purely military terms.

Mr. Félix Calderón, in his address, emphasized that the 1993 Convention, in addition to strengthening security and confidence, was also of importance to the economies of the region, since it encouraged the States parties to participate in the fullest possible exchange of chemical substances, equipment and scientific and technical information relating to the application and development of the chemical sector for peaceful purposes. He called on countries of the region to submit more applications for the training courses for inspectors and inspection assistants in the future Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In this way, Latin America and the Caribbean would be adequately represented on the inspection teams when the Convention entered into force.

An important element of the Seminar was the demonstration of a routine inspection of a dummy facility producing a Schedule 3 chemical (triethanolamine). In this exercise, each phase of an inspection of this type was explained and simulated. Special attention was given to those stages considered essential to an understanding of the verification procedure at a facility producing a Schedule 3 chemical.

The participants emphasized that this activity represented an important contribution on Cuba's part to the success of the Seminar. There was general agreement that the Seminar had allowed the fullest exchange of opinions on the measures already adopted by the countries of the region as part of the process of preparing for the future implementation of the provisions of the Convention when it came into force and for the establishment of a National Authority in each country.

In the course of the Seminar, the following topics were examined:

(a) Matters for consideration by the States parties during the preparatory phase of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention;

(b) National experience relating to the establishment of a National Authority;

(c) Matters relating to the chemical industry;

(d) Rights and obligations of the States parties to the Convention in the matters of assistance (article X) and technical cooperation (article XI);

(e) The Preparatory Commission: a survey of its activities.

On the subject of "Matters for consideration by the States parties during the preparatory phase of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention", three papers were presented by guest speakers, dealing with various legal issues which had previously been examined by a selected group of countries. The papers reported on basic aspects of the national regulations of certain countries, some of which were deemed useful for the region.

On the subject of "National experience relating to the establishment of a National Authority", six papers were presented, some by the delegations of countries of the region, others by guest speakers, reporting on specific experience in the establishment of National Authorities in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Russian Federation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

On the subject "Matters relating to the chemical industry", the following issues were discussed:

(a) Effects of the provisions of the Convention on States which did not possess chemical weapons;

(b) Activities within the chemical industry to comply with the provisions of the Convention.

With regard to the first issue, the following specific aspects were examined:

(a) Identification of activities which required declaration, on which two papers were presented;

(b) The chemical industry and confidentiality in the Convention on chemical weapons: national points of view - on which one paper was presented;

(c) Identification of chemical imports and exports and collection of data on imports and exports requiring declaration, on which one paper was presented.

With regard to the second issue, the following specific aspects were examined:

(a) Declarations and declaration forms, on which one paper was presented;

(b) Routine inspections in the chemical industry, on which three papers were presented.

On the subject "Rights and obligations of the States parties to the Convention in the matter of assistance (article X) and technical cooperation (article XI)", three papers were presented. They dealt with how important it was for developing countries to have international cooperation in the elimination of restrictions and limitations imposed unilaterally or by a group of countries, preventing or hindering free trade; access to equipment, technologies and scientific and technical information other than those stipulated in the provisions of the Convention; and the need to guarantee unhindered development of the chemical industry for legitimate and peaceful ends in the countries of the region.

Further, it was emphasized that all national legislation would need to be reviewed before the entry into force of the Convention, in order to guarantee compliance with all its provisions by all the States parties, without exception.

On the subject "The Preparatory Commission: a survey of its activities", basic aspects of the Commission's work were highlighted, namely, the progress of

the various expert groups established within working groups A and B; existing difficulties; and future tasks. A set of proposals to enhance the Commission's work and facilitate the search for solutions to outstanding matters was put forward in the course of the four presentations made on the subject.

Consideration of the above questions led to a free discussion among the participants, which made it clear that their interests coincided.

Participants in the Seminar from the countries of the region confirmed their undertakings regarding the basic objectives and purposes of the Convention, and their intention to ratify it at whatever time each country considered most appropriate.

The participants themselves also underlined the importance of the United States of America and the Russian Federation becoming States parties to the Convention before it entered into force, in order to ensure the achievement of the basic objectives of the Convention.

The participants from the countries of the region remained convinced that the holding of regional seminars, properly prepared and with well-defined and specific objectives, was of vital importance for developing countries. All necessary steps should be taken, therefore, to organize more such seminars in the future. For that reason, the Seminar participants expressed their great appreciation and deep gratitude to the secretariat for organizing the seminars and hoped that they would continue to receive the support of the States members of the Commission in their work.

In the course of the Seminar, the Cuban delegation circulated a draft programme of action, the main objective of which was to facilitate the fullest cooperation possible among the countries of the region in those areas which were relevant to them, in order to be able to progress jointly with the necessary preparation for the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

Particular thanks were extended to the Governments of Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for their invaluable financial contribution to the work of the Seminar.

Lastly, the participants expressed their appreciation to the Cuban authorities for the high quality of the organization of the Seminar and for the facilities made available to them to ensure its success.

UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/227
E/1995/99
20 June 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Item 98 (b) of the preliminary list*
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 1995
Item 6 (i) of the
provisional agenda**
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL
QUESTIONS

Desertification and drought

Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and of the medium-term and of the medium term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in pursuance of Assembly resolution 48/175 of 21 December 1993, the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the overall implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, including implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

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* A/50/50/Rev.1.

** E/1995/100.

95-18556 (E) 030795 060795

ANNEX

Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification 1993-1994

Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 35/73 of 5 December 1980, requested the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to report every other year to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the overall implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. Further, in its resolution 39/168 B of 17 December 1984, the Assembly requested the Governing Council to make the necessary arrangements at each session for submitting a report to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

2. In its decision 18/26, adopted on 26 May 1995, the Governing Council authorized the Executive Director to submit the present report, which includes her report on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region, on behalf of the Council, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION 1993-1994

A. Technical assistance to Governments

3. In 1993-1994, UNEP continued to support Governments in developing and implementing national plans of action to combat desertification. The period was marked by an increase in activities as national plans of action were completed and launched, others began to be developed and other initiatives were begun.

4. National plans of action were launched and priority projects developed in Bahrain, Chile, Mexico, Mongolia, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Activities were initiated to develop national plans for Argentina, Bolivia and China, taking into account the more comprehensive approach demanded in the national action programmes to combat desertification called for under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (see A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II). Preparatory activities were undertaken in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakstan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Kalmykia in the Russian Federation.

5. In addition, UNEP assisted Governments in other desertification-related activities, including seminars and programme reviews. During the reporting period evaluations were carried out on pilot village projects in Zimbabwe and Uganda, under the Cairo Programme for African Cooperation of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

B. Regional actions and networks

6. In 1993-1994, UNEP provided assistance in the spheres of policy and strategy, project development, desertification assessment, information and

training, village workshops and sharing project experience, to subregional organizations in sub-Saharan Africa, the Conference of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment, the African Deserts and Arid Lands Committee and the Desertification Control Research and Training Network for Asia and the Pacific.

7. UNEP continued to serve as the secretariat for the African Deserts and Arid Lands Committee and to support the Desertification Control Research and Training Network for Asia and the Pacific, particularly in the establishment of a regional office for the Network at Tehran and the organization of regional meetings. It also collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to strengthen the Regional Technical Cooperation Network on Arid and Semi-arid Lands in the Latin American and Caribbean region and provided assistance to coordination meetings and for the publication of a network newsletter.

C. Training

8. In 1993-1994, 1,025 participants from developing countries attended training courses in different aspects of desertification control and dryland management, organized by UNEP and other members of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification, namely the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Institute for Environment and Development.

D. Assessment and mapping

9. UNEP activity continued in this area, evaluating project results and organizing and supporting activities to develop assessment and mapping methodologies and make them operational in pilot countries such as China, Kenya and Pakistan. Various studies, meetings and workshops considered other aspects of desertification assessment and land management, such as the interaction between climate and desertification, soil resilience, the assessment of degradation in cultivated soils, indicators of sustainability, land quality and community evaluation of project activities, appropriate technologies for sustainable land management and economic valuation of environment and natural resources.

E. Evaluation and monitoring

10. As the task manager for reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development on progress in implementing chapter 12 of Agenda 21, UNEP, in cooperation with other organizations, prepared the thematic report on desertification.

11. The evaluation of recommended "success-story" activities was continued. Ten case-studies were evaluated, eight were selected as having succeeded in sustainably controlling desertification and three were nominated for consideration for the Global 500 Award.

12. In environmental monitoring, UNEP support continued to the World Soil and Terrain Database project, the results of which will be used for the new global assessment of desertification.

F. Information

13. Four issues of the Desertification Control Bulletin, a special issue of Our Planet on desertification, the World Map of Present-day Landscapes and a study on the interactions of desertification and climate were completed. Copies of publications and other documents on desertification control were disseminated widely.

III. COORDINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

14. The marked increase in joint activities in desertification control within the United Nations system and with other organizations, such as non-governmental organizations, covered fields such as strategic planning, assessment methodologies, scientific aspects of desertification, environmental information systems and operational field activities. This was particularly evident during the negotiation process of the Convention, where coordinated support was provided to the ad hoc secretariat and to Governments in affected countries, in the definition of the technical scientific and political issues involved and in the formulation of the texts of the Convention and the regional annexes.

15. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations increased in line with the role assigned to them in Agenda 21 and the cross-cutting nature of desertification control led to a growth of cooperation with centres of excellence and academic institutions. Similarly, linkages between different aspects of desertification as reflected in the various chapters of Agenda 21 also encouraged cooperation and coordination.

IV. NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

16. UNEP played a notable role in the negotiation process for the Convention of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Convention to Combat Desertification, including by providing substantive, financial and technical support to the secretariat, to regional and subregional organizations, and to affected countries, for case-studies on desertification and for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the negotiation process. UNEP also contributed to the establishment of the International NGO Network on Desertification. The success of UNEP efforts in providing support to African Governments, non-governmental organizations and subregional organizations for the negotiation process is reflected in the fact that 42 of the 53 countries in Africa had signed the Convention by the end of 1994.

17. UNEP participated actively, with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), UNSO, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (ADB), in the joint secretariat, in the substantial input of OAU to the Convention and in the OAU Ad Hoc Group of Experts on desertification, which developed Africa's contribution to the negotiation process and drafted the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa, the resolution on urgent action for Africa and strategies for negotiating and implementing the Convention. In the second half of 1994, attention moved to planning activities for implementing the Convention, especially concerning urgent action in Africa, and to continuing support for the interim secretariat.

18. UNEP contributed substantively to background knowledge on desertification, particularly in relation to emerging issues. UNEP urged that the "right to remain" for those who so wished be incorporated in the Almeria Statement on desertification and migration. Studies on the social aspects of desertification, its effects on migration, the linkages between desertification and both biodiversity and climate were carried out and work on the subject of gender issues and desertification was begun. The workshop "Listening to the people: social aspects of dryland management", held at Nairobi in December 1993, aimed to develop a better understanding of "community participation" and "bottom-up development", in order to make recommendations for achieving sustainable development in the drylands. The success-story evaluations will provide tools for use in the community-level implementation of the national plans of action to combat desertification requested under the Convention.

V. FINANCING AND OTHER MEASURES IN SUPPORT OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

19. UNEP participated with the other Global Environment Facility (GEF) partners in the preparation of an issues paper on the funding of the incremental costs of activities concerning land degradation, as they relate to the four GEF focal areas and on the operational strategy paper, both for consideration by the GEF Council.

VI. ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICE

20. The UNSO programme focused on five major areas: the Convention process; national plans of action; drought preparedness and mitigation; environmental information systems; and local-level natural resource management. These were supported by information and resource mobilization activities.

21. In addition to support for African countries, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/UNSO, as a member of the joint secretariat, supported OAU in the negotiation process for the Convention, in subregional consultations and for the OAU Expert Group on Desertification. After June 1994, attention turned to the preparation of national plans of action to combat desertification, through support to national forums of partners, subregional organizations and non-governmental organizations.

22. The strategic framework processes programme continued, with attention being given to strengthening and ensuring coordination among national and local anti-desertification authorities; developing national plans of action; community empowerment; and harmonization in natural resource management programmes. In cooperation with the World Bank and ADB, the Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa was established to operationalize the concept of sustainable development in Africa.

23. A programme was launched in East Africa to build capacity in drought-preparedness and mitigation in Ethiopia and provide support to the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development for the preparation of a regional disaster- and drought-management strategy.

24. Concerning environmental information systems, the focus was on improved national and regional exchange of environmental information on a demand-driven, participatory basis, through the definition of priority needs in information, training and institutional mechanisms to manage environmental information. Work to identify and test desertification indicators for use at project level also began.

25. Project reviews attempted to identify constraints on implementation at local level, and country dialogue to exchange information among natural resource management projects was promoted. New approaches to land management, pastoralism and community participation were studied and developed. Two innovative projects combining anti-desertification efforts with schemes for carbon sequestration were funded during the GEF pilot phase.

26. Information dissemination and the publication programme continued with the regular updates on negotiations by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, a poster and technical publications providing background information to major themes of the Convention.

27. In response to the demands of Agenda 21 and the Convention, negotiations were begun in order to reorient the joint venture mechanism into a partnership to implement chapter 12 of Agenda 21 world wide, and UNDP/UNSO began a resource mobilization campaign for the implementation of the Convention and, in particular, the resolution on urgent action for Africa.

28. As the central entity within UNDP coordinating UNDP system activities in desertification control, UNSO also developed a UNDP system-wide anti-desertification strategy.